

MINUTES
ENTERPRISE ZONE COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2010

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Biede at 5:02 p.m.

The Commission made introductions and welcomed Greg Halverson, the new EZ Commissioner, filling the economic development position. Also introduced were Todd Clark (CB Plant Manager), Billie Determan (Controller) and Teresa Hecker (HQ Tax Department) representing ConAgra.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Biede, Halverson, Jares and Stazzoni

Absent: Andersen, Hornbeck, Milford and Prichard

CD Staff: Brenda Carrico

Others: Terry Bailey, Todd Clark, Billie Determan and Teresa Hecker

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Halverson, second by Stazzoni to adopt the agenda as printed. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

4. APPROVAL – MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2009

Motion by Stazzoni, second by Halverson to adopt the minutes as printed. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

5. PROOF OF PUBLICATION

Presented by staff.

6. REVIEW OF APPLICATION

A. ConAgra Foods Packaged Foods, LLC

Carrico summarized the project to the Commission and provided updated job information and the Enterprise Zone Program Application Supplement to the Commissioners. This project involves the creation of 20 new jobs and the retention of 50 employees at the Council Bluffs plant. There are three main items ConAgra would like to achieve with this project: the addition of a new product line, the installation of a new “Clean In Place” Sanitation System and an increase in line efficiencies. The project involves an investment of \$39,800,000. The Council Bluffs plant is competing with other ConAgra locations for this project. The Enterprise Zone incentives allow the Council Bluffs location to remain competitive with the other states being considered.

Carrico ended her summary by stating that the City’s approval of the application is contingent upon ConAgra installing a brick and steel fence and landscaping along 9th Avenue from South 3rd Street to South 4th Street, similar to what is on South Main Street. This installation should occur within 12 months after ConAgra completes the acquisition of all of the homes along 9th Avenue. Biede asked if ConAgra was agreeable to this condition. Todd Clark responded that it depended on their future expansion plans and how the plant would be physically expanded. The company’s unofficial plans were to expand the building footprint all the way to 9th Avenue, eliminating the any space for such a fence and landscaping. The Commission engaged in a discussion regarding the future expansion and aesthetics of the requirement. Halverson prompted Clark to speak about the company’s partnership with Habitat for Humanity by allowing them to salvage any materials from the single family homes for their Restore facility.

Jares asked if these single family acquisitions would square off the property and Clark responded yes. Jares also inquired about the number of employees at the CB location. Clark said approximately 908. Lastly, Jares asked about the retention of the 50 employees. Clark responded that these 50 employees all worked on one production line.

Stazzoni asked about the timing of the project. Clark said they are scoping and engineering the project now and hope to start on the production line in April or May. Determan added that the “Clean In Place” Sanitation System would be phased in beginning in April and that the company was already working on the line efficiencies.

Carrico said that the new jobs would have an average hourly wage of \$14.40 and Determan confirmed that they would be created within two years. Halverson reminded the company and Commission that the state’s rules include a five year project period. The company has two years to create the jobs and then must maintain them for three years.

Stazzoni asked the company if they have had any problems filling vacant positions. Clark responded that they have had pretty good success with recruitment. Jares asked about the company’s benefits and Hecker replied that a summary was available in the application. She also added that the wage base in the application is without overtime and a significant number of their employees work substantial overtime.

Motion by Jares, second by Stazzoni to concur with staff’s recommendation and approve the applicant’s request for Enterprise Zone benefits as submitted. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote by those present. Per the Commission’s by-laws, Carrico polled the absent members and obtained aye votes from Hornbeck and Milford. Carrico informed the company that City Council will review their application at the meeting on January 11, 2010 and they should be present to answer any of Council’s questions. Halverson also suggested that they attend the study session at 3:45 p.m. on that same day.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Carrico informed the Commission that the enterprise zone law will expire on June 30, 2010. This means no new zones or amendments to current zones will be allowed, unless new legislation is passed. Given the current economic climate and the political ramifications of the film office tax credits, staff wants to ensure that all eligible areas are covered by zones prior to this date just in case new legislation is not passed. Carrico and the Commission discussed the areas being considered by staff which include the old hotel site on Nash Boulevard, ground along South Omaha Bridge Road and 24th Street, land around Nebraska Avenue and a small area around the Pine Ridge Apartments. Carrico reminded the Commission that the establishment of any new zones will require their approval prior to submission to the City Council and subsequently to the State. A future meeting will be held once the draft applications have been completed.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Halverson, second by Stazzoni to adjourn the meeting at 5:38 p.m. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote of these present.